

# **EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

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## **REMARKS OF U.S. AMBASSADOR JAMES F. MORIARTY ON THE OCCASION OF PACIFIC ISLANDER MONTH CELEBRATION**

**DHAKA, MAY 14 --** U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty made the following remarks at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka to celebrate Asia Pacific Islander Month today:

(Begin Text)

I would like to thank Mr. Elthem Kabir, Chairman, of the Society for Promotion of Bangladesh Art, for this fantastic book. I would like to thank the Embassy's Diversity Committee for organizing this exhibition of Bangladeshi art. This is a wonderful way to help us promote Bangladeshi culture during a month in which we celebrate Asian/Pacific Heritage in the United States. I would also like to recognize the artists who are here today for their talent and for sharing their work with us.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated in May to commemorate the contributions of people of Asian and Pacific Island ancestry in the United States. This date was chosen because two important anniversaries occurred during this time: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in America on May 7, 1843 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (largely by Chinese laborers) on May 10, 1869.

Asian Americans are the third largest minority group -- and the second fastest-growing group -- in the United States. At present almost five percent of the U.S. population, 14.9 million Americans claim Asian heritage. There are another one million Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.

Throughout the United States, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated with community festivals, traditional foods, parades and cultural performances. Many schools and government offices hold educational and cultural events.

In addition to Asian/Pacific Heritage Month, the U.S. government celebrates America's diversity through the "Outstanding Americans by Choice" awards. These awards have been presented since 2006 by the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) to recognize the

professional accomplishments and civic participation of naturalized U.S. citizens. To date about a dozen Asian Americans have been named Outstanding Americans by Choice.

President Bush, in his Proclamation of Asian/Pacific Month, 2008 stated, “Americans who trace their ancestry to Asia and the Pacific Islands have contributed much to our nation. Asian/Pacific Americans have made our country better with their talents and hard work. Their values and commitment to family and community have helped shape and strengthen America. These citizens speak many languages, honor countless traditions, and practice different faiths but they are bound by a shared commitment to freedom and liberty. The diversity among Asian/Pacific Americans adds to the cultural fabric of our society. Asian/Pacific Americans have enriched our culture, excelling in many fields, including education, business, science, technology, government, sports, and the arts. We especially honor those Asian/Pacific Americans who have answered the call to protect the cause of freedom by serving in our Armed Forces. These brave men and women set a powerful example for all Americans. As we celebrate Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, we are reminded of the richness of the Asian and Pacific cultures. Asian/Pacific Americans enhance the American experience and contribute to our country’s legacy of diversity. “

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*#As prepared for delivery*

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*Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)*